

List of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A nonwoven fibrous mat having a smooth surface for coating, the smooth surface having a reduced amount of "stand up fibers" comprising a blend of fibers of at least two different lengths falling within the range of about 0.12 inch and about 0.6 inch bound together with a cured binder, the binder content of the mat being in the range of about 10-25 weight percent of the finished mat, the fibers having an average fiber diameter in the range of about 9 and about 14 microns and about 25 to about 50 wt. percent fibers having a length of less than about 0.4 inch long and about 75 to about 50 wt. percent fibers having a length at least about 0.45 inch long.
2. (Original) The mat of claim 1 wherein the binder is selected from a group consisting of an acrylic, a polyvinyl alcohol, a hydroxyl ethyl cellulose, a carboxyl methyl cellulose, a cellulose gums, a polyvinyl pyrrolidone, polyvinyl acetate, urea formaldehyde, melamine formaldehyde, with or without a crosslinking agent, with or without one or more plasticizers, and mixtures thereof.
3. (Original) The mat of claim 1 wherein about half of the fiber is at least about 0.45 inch long and a remainder of the fiber is less than about 0.4 inch long.
4. (Currently amended) The mat of claim 1 wherein the mat contains about 75 wt. percent fiber that is at least about 0.45 inch long and about 25 wt. percent fiber that is about 0.2 inch long ~~long~~.
5. (Currently amended) A laminate comprising a layer of nonwoven fiber mat having a smooth surface for coating, the smooth surface having a reduced amount of "stand up fibers" and comprising a blend of fibers of at least two different lengths falling within the range of about 0.12 inch and about 0.8 inch bound together with a cured binder, the binder content of the mat being in the range of about 10-25 weight percent of the finished mat, the fibers having an average fiber diameter in the

range of about 9 and about 14 microns, and about 25 to about 50 wt. percent fibers having a length of less than about 0.4 inch long and about 75 to about 50 wt. percent fibers having a length at least about 0.45 inch long, a surface of said mat being bonded to at least one layer of different material.

6. (Original) The laminate of claim 5 wherein the binder is selected from a group consisting of an acrylic, a polyvinyl alcohol, a hydroxyl ethyl cellulose, a carboxyl methyl cellulose, a cellulose gums, a polyvinyl pyrrolidone, polyvinyl acetate, urea formaldehyde, melamine formaldehyde, with or without a crosslinking agent, with or without one or more plasticizers, and mixtures thereof.
7. (Original) The laminate of claim 5 wherein about half of the fiber is at least about 0.45 inch long and a remainder of the fiber is less than about 0.4 inch long.
- 8.. (Original) The mat of claim 5 wherein the mat contains about 75 wt. percent fiber that is at least about 0.45 inch long and about 25 wt. percent fiber that is about 0.2 inch long.

9-13 (Cancelled)

14. (Original) The mat of claim 1 wherein about half of the fiber is at least about 0.45 inch long and a remainder of the fiber is less than about 0.4 inch long.
15. (Original) The laminate of claim 5 wherein about half of the fiber is at least about 0.45 inch long and a remainder of the fiber is less than about 0.4 inch long.